

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action dated September 8, 2008 and the reference cited therein have been carefully considered. In response to the Office Action, Applicant has amended Claims 1, 4-7 and 9-12, canceled Claims 3 and 8 and added new Claim 14, which, when considered with the remarks set forth below, are deemed to place the case with Claims 1-2, 4-7 and 9-14 in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action, Claims 1-13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by German Patent No. DE 19746179 to Stoll or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the DE '179 patent. In sum, the Examiner has adopted the assessment of the EPO Examiner set forth in the International Preliminary Report on Patentability issued in the corresponding EPO application.

In response, Applicant has amended Claim 1 to include the limitations of Claims 3 and 8, and Claims 3 and 8 have been canceled. Applicant points out that the same amendment was made to the claims of the corresponding EPO application to overcome the same rejection based on the DE '179 reference. As a result of the amendment, the corresponding EPO application was granted as EP 1711717.

Specifically, Claim 1 has been amended to define a compressed air system servicing device having several modularly configured functional modules, wherein each of the functional modules includes an electrical concatenation block connected to a basic pneumatic block for electrical longitudinal concatenation of the functional modules, and wherein the concatenation block has electrical and/or mechanical decoding means for recognition of the functional block connected to the basic pneumatic block. It is respectfully submitted that the cited DE '179 reference does not disclose a concatenation block having electrical and/or mechanical decoding means for recognition of other functional blocks connected to the basic pneumatic block, as defined in amended Claim 1.

It is true that the DE '179 reference discloses a compressed air servicing unit including function blocks, wherein each function block has interlinking blocks (bus stations). However,

each bus station of the function blocks disclosed in the DE '179 patent has to be adapted and configured to the respective function block in connection with the respective program.

In stark contrast, the electrical concatenation blocks, as defined in amended Claim 1, have electrical and/or mechanical decoding means for recognizing the function block mounted to the respective basic pneumatic block. Therefore, when mounting a function block to the basic pneumatic block, this function block will be automatically identified in the concatenation interlinking block and no adaptation and configuration is necessary.

Thus, the cited DE '179 reference does not disclose means for automatic configuration or adaptation of functional blocks. In particular, the DE '179 reference does not disclose a concatenation block having electrical and/or mechanical decoding means for recognition of other functional blocks connected to the basic pneumatic block, as defined in amended Claim 1. Accordingly, it respectfully submitted that amended Claim 1 and the claims that depend therefrom patentably distinguish over the prior art.

Applicant has also added a new Claim 14, which is similar to amended Claim 1, but written in a slightly different format. Accordingly, for the same reasons as set forth above with respect to amended Claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that new Claim 14 patentably distinguishes over the prior art.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, favorable consideration and allowance of the application with Claims 1-2, 4-7 and 9-14 are respectfully solicited. If the Examiner believes that a telephone interview would assist in moving the application toward allowance, he is respectfully invited to contact the Applicants' attorney at the telephone number listed below.

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